

RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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THE GRAND OLD STORIES

by F. N. Wearing
Liverpool, England

When I was a boy in the States, way back in the early Nineties, I lived at 383 40th St., South Brooklyn on the way to Coney Island. Next door was a family named Hildebrand, and in the parlor cupboard of a large book-case were piles of Munsay's Golden Rogers, Monros Golden Hours, Tousey's Wide Awake Library, and Boys of New York. I had access to this collection of tales. I distinctly recollect a lot of yellow back novels about highwaymen such as Dick Turpin, Jack Sheppard, Sixteen String Jack, Blue-skin, and all the other malefactors of the galloping crew. Think these books must have been DeWitts, as he seemed to be the specialist in this line. Anyhow, I revelled in them, and they started me on a liking for the old romantic papers which during the last fifty years I have never lost. Don't suppose they will be in that old book-case now, but stranger things have happened. But I guess the old house will have been pulled down—it was all country and woods then. My parents came back to England to collect a legacy and settled down. A few years later I got in touch with various collectors in America, and by exchanging British boys papers got together a nice lot of the good old Beadles Dime and Half Dime Libraries. My favorites in these were Capt. Frank Whittaker, Albert W. Aiken with the splendid Dick Talbot, and Fresh of Frisco Series, Edward Willetts Stories of the Lumber camps, also J. C.

Cowdricks New York Street Life Tales of Broadway Billy. I recollect one of the old King Brady Titles in Boys of New York, "99 99th St., or The House Without a Door," with the illustration of an enormous flight of steps leading to the house and slouch-hatted Mr. Brady half way up. Golden Hours was running a yarn "Fata Morgana." No. 1 of Tousey's "Golden Weekly" with "Montezumas Millions." How the old titles stick in my mind—those were the days! I have an old scrap book filled with about 100 of Eds sketches from Boys of N. Y. such as Romance and Reality, Down on Peter Pads Farm, The Cable Sketches—all real old time fun. Also contains Tom Teasers "Nip and Flip"—Harrigan and Harts songs! When I get tired of the present day junk masquerading as humor, I take this old scrapbook down, and have a good laugh. Another of my favorites was Commodore Ah Look, otherwise Edward Greey (not GREY). I have a few of his tales in my 72 no. set of Tousey's "Snaps;" with those fine colored covers by Thomas Worth. Titles Cheeky and Chipper, Sassy Sam, Billy Bankus, Also in Frank Leslie's papers, Chums, Chums in Japan, Chums at College, Inventor Ben, Keep Your Bounds, Over the Line, Stuttering Dave, and a few more I can't recollect now, "Extree Nick" in Tousey's Wide Awake Library. Often wondered how Edward Greey came to write under the nom-de-plume of Commodore Ah Look. I have a copy of a book—Bluejackets—by him, published by J. E. Tilton, Boston 1872, a fine story of the British Navy, and China, written in his breezy style. Allibone's book

of authors devotes nearly a page to Edward Greey.

I have pleasant memories of many swaps with George S. Barton, and of his neat little monthly Boys Life. He was greatly interested in the old British boys papers, and must have got together a nice collection. One thing I am always thankful for in the collecting of the old papers, is the durability of the paper stock used before the woodpulp age. I have some volumes of Frank Leslie's boys' papers round about the 1870 period, and the quality of the paper used is as new—no browned edges, and Autumn Leaves—most of the British boys papers before 1890 show no sign of deterioration but after that date many show signs of edges going brown. Even the fierce old Bloods issued a hundred years ago such as Varney The Vampire, Three Fingered Jack, Moonlight Jack, Old House in West Street, Black Pirate, etc. show no signs of cracking edges. Well I guess Editor Cummings will be charging me space rates, but I hope these recollections will interest Round Up readers.

BOSTON PITCHER THREW DOUBLE-SHOOT IN GAME AGAINST BALTIMORE IN '96

By Burt L. Standish

(Away back in 1898 a Chicago reader wrote to Street & Smith and asked how to throw the famous Frank Merriwell pitch; the double-shoot. While browsing through my file of original Tip-Tops the other evening I came across the authors reply. It is published in 107 Tip-Top on April 30, 1898 and believing it would prove of interest to those readers of The Round Up who have never had the opportunity of examining the earlier numbers I copied it and submitted it to the editor of The Round Up.—Geo. Flaum.)

"Street & Smith, Publishers, Dear Sir: A Chicago reader of the Tip-Top Weekly has asked how to throw the "double-shoot," a remarkable curve used by Frank Merriwell in pitching. I would willingly give him the information sought if it were possible, but I doubt if there is a person living who can tell on paper how to throw this curve. Old ball players will say, with very few exceptions, that it is

an absolute impossibility for scientific reasons; but it is not many years ago that intelligent, well-educated persons positively asserted it was an impossibility to throw any kind of a curve. It is said that Billy Mains, who was given a trial on the Bostons in '96 can throw the double curve, but that he is not able to control it. I saw him pitch his first three innings for Boston in the opening game with Baltimore. He was put in the box after Boston had the game safely in hand, and the very first ball he pitched caused twenty persons in the grand stand to shout, 'Oh, did you see that?' At my side sat a man who exclaimed, 'I have been following baseball for fifteen years, and this is the first time that I ever saw an out curve that ended with an inshoot.' As for myself, I had been wondering if my eyes had not deceived me, for to me it had seemed that the ball had curved both in and out. And the Baltimore batter was so astonished that he dropped his stick and stared at the long, 'gangling' fellow in the pitcher's box as if he saw a wizard. There is a book published called, 'The Art of Zigzag Curve Pitching,' but whether it describes the 'double-shoot' or not I do not know. Sincerely yours, BLS."

BLOOD-AND-THUNDER NOVELS WERE LIKED IN LAST CENTURY

Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Sun., May 6, '45

Editor Old Timers:

What did the boys of the 70's and 80's read? If they were in their teens they very likely read the same story papers as their elders, the Fireside Companion, the Family Story Paper, the New York Weekly (edited by a Brooklynite, Thomas C. Glynn, whom I knew well in the 90's), or the New York Ledger with its thrilling serials by Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth, Sylvanus Cobb and my old time friend Emerson Bennett, the frontier novelist.

In the main, however, boys read Harper's Young People with its Toby Tyler stories; the Youth's Companion and Golden Days with tales of adventure by Edward S. Ellis, William Murray Graydon and others. If their taste was more lurid they read the Banner Weekly whose authors were on the Beadle and Adams dime novel staff, or the Boys of New York, an annual

publication. Also very much read was *The Chatterbox* with stories by Harry Castlemon (Charles A. Fosdick). The books by Horatio Alger and Oliver Optic were also popular as were the Jack Harkaway series by the English writer, Bracebridge Hemming. Capt. Mayne Reid's Indian tales were tops with all boys. There were also editions of stories by English authors, "Peter the Whaler," "Erling the Bold," "Red Eric," etc., printed by the Munro's, R. M. Ballantyne and W. H. G. Kingston were popular British writers of juvenile fiction.

The Leather Stocking series by James Fenimore Cooper and Dickens' novels were not read as much by the boys as might be expected for truth to tell the literary taste of the average kid of that period was more delighted by the authors of the house of Beadle and Adams who published very popular dime and half-dime novels.

The elders of that day disapproved of youth reading these novels but time and literary judgment have proved that they were not at all detrimental to the morals of boyhood. Virtue was always rewarded, vice condemned, villainy punished, justice sustained and bad language avoided in these cheap but exciting booklets.

Many a gray head of today recalls with a thrill the voluminous Deadwood Dick series by Edward L. Wheeler; the captivating sea tales of Lt. Harry Dennis Perry, and the long list of Indian and Western stories by T. C. Harbaugh, Oll Coomes, Capt. Fred Whitaker, William R. Eyster, Leon Lewis, C. Dunning Clark, Capt. Howard Holmes, J. C. Cowdrick, Charles Morris, William G. Patten who wrote Beadle half-dime novels before he started the Frank Merriwell series, and Col. Prentiss Ingraham whose novels outdid that of J. H. Ingraham, his clergyman father, whose "Lafitte the Pirate of the Gulf" was once a best seller.

Prentiss Ingraham must have written over 50 Buffalo Bill stories. Other prolific writers of this grade of fiction were Capt. J. F. C. Adams, Lt. A. K. Sims, George C. Jenks, Edward Willett, Capt. Mark Wilton, William H. Manning, Albert W. Aiken, whose brother, George Aiken, also a dime novelist, dramatized Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," still

played to this day.

Among the authors who stirred the imagination of the boys of the 70's and 80's was Ned Buntline (E. Z. C. Judson), who was quite a character himself. He fomented the quarrel between the American tragedian, Edwin Forrest, and the English tragedian, William C. Macready, which resulted in the Astor Place riot of 1849. Buntline also made a hero of William F. Cody in his series of Buffalo Bill novels, wrote a play for him, the "Prairie Wolf," and started him on the way of becoming the international showman of afteryears.

It has been my privilege to have read many of the great authors of various times and nations and to have let my fancy roam with the great poets of all times, but I doubt if I ever got greater pleasure from them than I did from the almost surreptitious reading of the works of these masters of thrill and adventure, the authors of Beadle and Adams' half-dime novels. Unheralded by fame, meagerly paid, gone now and forgotten by the rest of the world, let me lay my spray of rosemary upon their forgotten graves in remembrance of the joy they gave me in the morning of my life.

—WILLIAM SIDNEY HILLYER.

NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

Have had several ads come in every month, way past closing date, and I have to rush them special delivery air mail to my printer in order to get them there in time, some times arriving too late, so pards, try and get ads in before the 28th of each month. What do you say?

Stanley Pachon says he'd like to see articles by Rev. Sawyer on Manning, Harbaugh and Coomes, since not much has been written on any of them.

If you haven't already sent in a bid on any of that big lot of items that Al Urban has, better do it now, before they are all gone.

Bill Burns says that the 3 issues of the "Blue Dwarf," published by Hogarth House of London, England, Vols. 1, 2, and 3, and the originals had colored plates in all 3 vols. While the 2nd and 3rd series of same never had plates.

In the words of Bros. Bragin, Dykes and Burns, we'll never see the likes of Charles Jonas again. He was a friend worth having, to every one. God bless him always.

Information from George Barton—That was quite a cover on "Parks Collectors Miscellany" for Jan. to July 1938. "Raring Jack, the Pirate Hunter." Published by Brett A re-issue of a Newsagents Pub. Co. "dreadful." A rather unusual item for E. J. Brett to get out for most of his stories were on a higher plane. I imagine that Brett must have been mixed up with the Newsagents Pub. Co. before he branched out for himself for I have some early numbers of the Boys of England which bear as publishers "The Newsagents Pub. Co."

Another interesting cover was Feb.-May 1937, illustrating "The Boys Half-Penny Weekly Budget of Plays, Stories, characters, and Scenes published in 1870. Wonder how long this lasted. I thought I had seen or read of about all the old English stuff, but this is a new one on me.

Did you know that in the very early days of the Wild West Weekly, pub. by Frank Tousey of New York, the stories were used as plots for two real Movie thrillers. (Tilman Le Blanc and Clyde Wakefield have also seen them). George says he remembers seeing the posters advertising the movie and also suggesting reading the story. It was at one of the movie houses in Bowdoin Square. A big, nearly life size poster of Young Wild West was the attention getter.

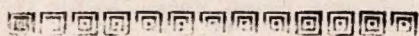
The Index Digest has gone very good but ye editor hasn't received enough to even pay for the printing of it yet, but no doubt when all the returns are in, he'll at least get his money back, some 15 or more have been returned so far. (One of our members from Bridgeport, Conn., said he doesn't like that kind of mail, so he didn't want either the index or Roundup any more.) Odd, wasn't it, as most of the members like to see things first, before they buy, as it makes it more interesting to see something first. I know I do, and items I'd probably never buy, when I've seen them, then I buy it.

Charles Duprez is wondering why Frank Tousey didn't use Fred Fearnots Twenty Rounds, in Work and Win, when they started to reprint

them at around No. 746, as it originally came out in no. 14. They also missed no. 1 too. Charlie landed some he wanted for a long time, they were Work & Win #20, 28, 14 etc. #28 as he remembers very well. Downing the Bully of Back Bay. I remember being on a ball ground with a flock of kids like myself talking about Freds Adventures, also of his own show, in no. 20, too. The reason for this one is that in those days, everything was Road Shows. Frank Merriwell was also an actor with his own show on the road. And as my brother who later became a very prominent American actor in England. He was on the road with many dramas, the old melodrama shows. It was he in fact, who started me on dime novels. What a stack he had. If only we had saved them. Drawers and drawers full of Happy Days, Diamond Dick, and every new Library that came out, he was sure to get them.

Charlie Daniel of Ilford, Essex, England, wrote me on June 26th, 1945, that his place in London had been blasted by rockets, the last to fall there. No one was hurt, but the place was badly shaken. His father died at about the time, suddenly, age 90. Charlie says a fine man, and missed sadly, always thoughtful and considerate to others, and never lost his temper. May God be with him always.

Bob Frye bought reprint Nugget Library #134. Tom Edison Jr's Electric Sea Spider, or the Wizard of the Submarine World, by Philip Reade, from ye editor Cummings for \$1.00 and says he wouldn't take a \$5.00 bill for it. When he was a kid of about 8 or 9 years old, his older brother had it when it was first published, and now after all these years, he can still remember the picture cover.



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